

After Beatles Came the Deluge

BY BILL WHITWORTH

Exclusive to The Times from the New York Herald Tribune

• In their two incredible tours of this country, the British rock 'n' roll group called the Beatles did more than make millions of dollars, incite riots throughout the land, win over the adults and disarm their critics.

Their most important accomplishment probably was opening the door here for all their hairy mates back home. The blokes are entering that door by the dozen now, with the result that American popular music is undergoing its second big upheaval of the past 10 years or so.

The first occurred in the 1950s, when the pop field was taken over, or appeared to be, by children. This was the advent of Elvis Presley and a hillbilly, ruralized version of rhythm and blues known as rock 'n' roll. Radio and the record industry haven't been the same since.

The second and current one is the increasing dominance of the field by young adults from Britain.

At any given time now, there is at least one of these groups touring the U.S. Two have just arrived, two have just left, and more than a dozen are scheduled to arrive here in the next few months. Though a few have flopped and none of them is doing the \$80,000 or \$90,000 a day of which the Beatles are capable, most are doing well. The Dave Clark Five, for instance, has a guarantee of \$10,000 a day on its current tour.

The Beatles laid the groundwork by appearing here and by leading Amer-

ican teenagers to search for Beatle news items in British fan magazines, which introduced them to other British performers. Suddenly, almost anything British was desirable to American teenagers.

This isn't to say that success has been automatic for the groups that have come after the Beatles; selling them has required energetic and imaginative promotion on the part of public relations agencies, record companies, fan magazines and the young fans themselves.

Typical of these campaigns is the one carried out for the Rolling Stones, a five-man vocal and instrumental group. The Stones were the third British group to come to the States, after the Beatles and the Dave Clark Five, and are now one of the most popular here and in England.

The Stones are not handsome or even cute, in any of the senses in which those words have been understood until just recently. One of them looks like a chimpanzee. Two look like very ugly Radcliffe girls. One resembles the encyclopedia drawings of pithecanthropus erectus. The fifth is a double for Ray Bolger in the role of Charley's Aunt. The Radcliffe girls and Charley's Aunt wear their hair much longer than the Beatles. A member of a group called the Pretty Things wears his longer still, and has it cut and set in a style that calls to mind Clairol ads.

The Stones' tour of this country was a success, of course. Their greatest

moment came when they created such a ruckus at Carnegie Hall that the place was declared forever off limits to rock performances.

The radio programing in almost any American city would lead the listener to think that rock 'n' roll had completely captured the nation's music audience. Record sales figures, if they mean anything, indicate that it hasn't.

The Record Industry Assn. of America, Inc., estimates that teen beat record sales during the past year came to \$154.6 million, out of a total record sales of \$529.6 million. This easily makes teen beat the top category of the market, with 29% of sales.

But "pop" records (Sinatra, Como, the big bands, etc.) had sales of \$120.7 million, and jazz and classics, often dismissed by radio stations as mere cult enthusiasms, had sales of \$48.3 million and \$68.4 million respectively. Total sales for these three categories came to \$237.4 million.

The only other sales estimates available are made by the research department of Billboard, a trade publication. Billboard estimates total sales at \$658 million, and gives the teen beat category credit for \$217.2 million. It puts pop sales at \$126 million and classics and jazz at \$58.2 million each.

It's known, of course, that there are no pop or jazz groups working the clubs and halls that can command Beatle-style wages. But there are dozens of them that make very big money, and they do it day after day.

PRIMA DONNAS DUEL ON HIGH C'S

BY DELOS SMITH

United Press International

• So far nothing has been said officially about the circumstances which will attend Maria Callas' return to the Metropolitan Opera, and this may be just as well from the viewpoint of Miss Callas' equanimity and self-confidence.

It now leaks out that those circumstances will pit Miss Callas against Renata Tebaldi in one of those duels of prima donnas which are so exciting to fanatic followers of particular prima donnas and so stimulating for the box office.

No opera buff needs to be reminded that these two were at one another's throats in the mid-50's. That is speaking figuratively, of course. But it is justified by the fact they were sharing the slippery pinnacle of being the foremost Italian-style prima donna of the day.

No prima donna shares that pinnacle with another if she can help it and both Miss Callas and Miss Tebaldi strained to shove the other off it. They were out-doing one another in singing and emoting the Verdi and Puccini heroines. Privately no love existed between them.

At operatic socials Miss Callas made disparaging wisecracks which got around. She'd sit conspicuously in a box while Miss Tebaldi was performing on stage, and Miss Tebaldi let it be known she thought Miss Callas was endeavoring to give her the "evil eye."

Persons familiar with Italian emotions will understand that this cannot be interpreted as a compliment. But Miss Callas began quarreling with opera house management and made herself persona non grata with a number of them, including that of the Metropolitan.

She pushed herself off the pinnacle and by her default Miss Tebaldi reigned supreme for a number of seasons. The season before

last the Met revived a proved turkey of an opera just for her—because she fancied herself in its prima donna role and insisted upon having it.

It was not a success, which is speaking gently. Miss Tebaldi's emotions were churned and physical fatigue set in to such an extent she had to withdraw from the company before the season was over.

Now she is back but so inconspicuously back you'd hardly be aware of its having anything to do with Miss Callas' scheduled return.

What the opera public doesn't know yet is that this was a warm-up for a series of appearances in the prima donna role of Puccini's "Tosca." This is a "two" which you can put together with another "two," that being Miss Callas' return to the Met will comprise only two performances—both as the heroine of Puccini's "Tosca."

Meanwhile, one's admiration for Rudolf Bing, general manager of the Met, as perhaps the most adroit manipulator of prima donnas of the century can become boundless.

He fired Miss Callas in 1958. Her embittered reaction reflected her opinion that he couldn't get away with it. He did get away with it, by merely ignoring her.

His next public mention of her was last summer, six years later, in a simple announcement that she was returning. Miss Callas then got word to her public that Bing had been so enraptured by the current Callas he had eaten humble pie to get her back.

On this propaganda Bing has had no comment, nor is comment needed. To the fullest extent anyone controls circumstances, he controls operatic circumstances and certainly he controlled those which will determine whether or not Miss Callas can out-Tosca Miss Tebaldi.

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